unreserved train between Amritsar and Barauni has been increased from bi-weekly to triweekly from October, 1996.

[English]

Assurance to the Passengers

996. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have given any assurance to the international passengers travelling to Gulf from Calicut Airport that the user's charge being levied on them at Calicut airport shall be dispensed with; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Euro Issue of V.S.N. Ltd.

997. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Comptroller and Auditor General of India in his recent report has expressed concern about the sudden scrapping of the Euro-issue-proposal of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. in May, 1994;

(b) whether enquiries have since been made into the circumstances of the scrapping of the proposal; and

(c) the extent of loss estimated to have been incurred by the Government as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The Director General of Audit, Post and Telecommunications has forwarded a copy of Draft Paragraph on deferment of Euro Issue" for inclusion in the C & AG Report, Union Govt. (Commercial) No. 3 of 1997 and has given an audit analysis of the case.

(b) and (c). Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Broad Gauge Line from Lumding to Silchar

998. SHRI DWARAKANATH DAS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Broad Gauge Line from Lumding to Silchar as proposed in the Railway Budget for 1996-97 is likely to go via Badarpur Railway junction of Karimganj District of Bihar;

(b) whether there is any proposal to extend the above line from Badarpur Railway Junction to Kumarghat in Tripura; and

(c) if so, by when the proposed Broad gauge line is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. However, Badarpur Junction is not located in Bihar but in Assam.

(c) The Lumding-Silchar Gauge Conversion has been sanctioned and work is being taken up. It is expected to be completed by the end of the 9th Plan. Gauge Conversion of linked lines beyond Badarpur/ Silchar are expected to be taken up thereafter as per availability of resources.

AIR/Doordarshan Projects

999. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state the details of AIR/Doordarshan Projects proposed to be taken up during the Ninth Plan, State-wise; location-wise?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : The Ninth plan proposals of All India Radio and Doordarshan are still under formulation. Hence, it would not be possible to specify the details thereof.

[Translation]

Superstitions in Serial

1000. SHRI GANGA CHARAN RAJPUT : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether most of the serials based on sorcery, hypocrisy and superstitions are being telecast on television;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken or being taken by the Government to stop the telecast of such serials?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Copper Mines under HCL

1001. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI :
SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR :

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Copper mines under Hindustan Copper Limited;

(b) the production in these mines during each of the last three years;